THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (c) No, Sir. No such proposal is under consideration.

(b) No distinction is made between monuments in cities and distant areas.

(d) Question does not arise.

Promotion of Health Tourism

1595. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BALAPTE:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a spurt in the arrival of foreign tourists in India during the current year;

(b) if so, the percentage of increase in the arrival of tourist traffic in 2005-06 as compared to 2004-05 and the amount of foreign exchange earned therefrom;

(c) what further steps are proposed to be taken by Government to improve the tourism sector;

(d) whether health tourism had caught up in a big way particularly in Maharashtra, Delhi. Karnataka and Kerala; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The estimated foreign tourist arrivals to India and also foreign exchange earnings from tourism during 2005-06 (April 2005 to January 2006) with corresponding figures for the year 2004-05 has been as follows:—

Year	Estimated Foreign Tourist Arrivals (In Million)	Estimated Foreign Exchange Earnings (In US$ Million)
2005-06 (April '05 to January '06')	3.22 (11.7%)	4789 (20.1%)
2004-05 (April' 04 to January' 05)	2.88	3987

Figures in brackets indicate% change on the same period of last year.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to boost tourism include development of tourist spots under its various schemes of infrastructure development for tourist circuits and destinations; focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels; enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions; and; publicity/campaign through Electronic and Print media, creation of World Class Collaterals; participation in Trade Fairs & Exhibitions, etc.

(d) and (e) Health & Medical tourism is one of the growing segments in India tourism, In order to reap its benefits, besides the Central Government, State Developments of Tourism have taken certain initiatives. While Kerala is offering health tourism through its traditional methods of Ayurveda products, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Delhi are offering sophisticated medical facilities through world class doctors at comparable low treatment costs.

Promotion of tourism in Orissa

1596. MS. PRAMILA BOHINDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that tourism has good potential in the creation of additional jobs and India has good potential in the tourism sector;

(b) if so, what is the action plan of Government to address the major constraints i.e. modernization of airports, setting up of low-budget hotels etc.; and

(c) what is the action plan of Government to boost tourism in the backward State of Orissa, which has good potential in this sector?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As regard modernization of airports, the Airports Authority of India has plans to upgrade the airports at various metro and non-metro cities. In the hotel sector, the Department of Tourism has requested the State Governments to initiate policies for setting up of hotels including low budget category hotels.

(c) The Department of Tourism extends central financial assistance to State/UTs including Orissa for implementation of various tourism projects, prioritized in consultation with them. During the Tenth Five Year Plan, Rs 30.16 crore has been sanctioned and Rs. 21.92 crore has so far been released in favour of Orissa for implementation of 22 tourism projects.